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## Symposium Abstract:

(400 words limit excluding title and author details; Submit by OCTOBER 24, 2014):

### **Food literacy: Definitions, components, learning and links to diet and health outcomes**

**Purpose:** This symposium will explore what is understood by the term food literacy, discuss how food literacy is acquired and disentangle the multi-faceted components of food literacy. It will present results relating to the factors that influence food literacy and examine the relationship between food literacy and diet and health outcomes.

**Rationale:** Recently, the term 'food literacy' has emerged in policy, research and practice to describe the collection of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to practically meet food needs. Despite this, there is no consensus of what is understood by the term food literacy and what it encompasses across different sectors of the population. There is also a lack of understanding as to how people become food literate and the impact food literacy has upon individuals' food choices and the resulting diet and health outcomes.

**Objectives:** To examine: (1) what is understood by food literacy, (2) how food literacy is acquired, (3) the specific components of food literacy and, (4) the impact of food literacy on skills, attitudes, cooking confidence and diet and health outcomes.

**Summary:** This symposium will include qualitative, quantitative and review data. Helen Vidgen will present research results from a Delphi study with Australian food experts and an interview study with 16-25 year old Australians on the meaning of food literacy and its relation to behaviour and nutrition. Fiona Lavelle will present qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with adults from the Island of Ireland examining the learning mechanisms underpinning components of food literacy, specifically examining cooking and wider food skills e.g., shopping, planning meals, eating healthily. Julia Somers will present results of an internet based survey (n=1041) with older Australian adults which identifies the links between food involvement, cooking confidence, pleasure from food and food difficulties. Marla Reicks will present extensive review findings on the impact of cooking and home food preparation interventions from across the globe on cooking skills, attitudes, cooking confidence, and diet and health outcomes.

**Format:** The four presentations cover data on the meaning and components of food literacy, how it is learnt and maintained and the impact of food literacy-related interventions on cooking skills, attitudes, cooking confidence, diet quality and health outcomes.